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*2559

Six Cows

Marriage

Dec. 17, 1865

[redacted]

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Fellow citizens of the Council and House of Representatives,

In compliance with your request I have the honor to transmit the papers accompanying this Communication.

The Territory is now engaged in the suppression of Indian hostilities of a very formidable character and in the perpetration of atrocities more serious and melancholy than all our previous experience of Indian cruelties, which for the past five years has brought its annual desolation and sorrow to the homes and hearts of our people.

Hostilities upon our northern frontier began with the murder of Chief Indian Agent Colon and other citizens of Washington Territory, which was succeeded by the repulse of an inadequate force of U. S. troops sent into the Indian country for the purpose of inflicting chastisement upon those guilty of these outrages.

Partly in answer to a requisition made upon me for aid by the officer in command of the U. S. troops in the district and more particularly to effectually check and subdue the impending combination of hostile tribes threatening the security of our settlers and their property in that quarter, I called upon my fellow citizens for the Companies of volunteers, which was responded to with the utmost alacrity by the counties of

Multnomah, Washington, Clackamas, Yamhill, Marion, Polk, Benton and Linn, each county displaying a commendable spirit of loyalty in promptly enrolling and sending its company into the field; so that in less than twenty-four days from the appearance of the proclamation, a regiment of mounted men, armed, equipped and supplied, were on our extreme Northern frontier, and the greater portion advancing to the possessions of the enemy's country.

While engaged in placing this regiment in the field I received intelligence of the incursion of hostile Indians into the settlements on our Southern frontier and the massacre of numbers of the inhabitants in that section and the pillage and destruction of their property. In reply to solicitations for aid and protection, an immediate call was made for two battalions of mounted volunteers for distinct service on the Southern frontier of the Territory, which calls were answered in the most prompt and gratifying manner by Linn, Lane, Umpqua, Douglas, Coos and Jackson counties. For greater efficiency these battalions have since been formed into a regiment.

For particulars respecting the organization and operations of the volunteer force I beg to refer you to the accompanying papers and the Adjutant General's report

which will soon be submitted. The zeal and gallantry displayed by the officers and men of both regiments deserve the warmest commendation.

The Territory has to deplore the loss of many of her excellent citizens who have nobly fallen in her defence. Their services will be cherished in the hearts of a grateful and generous people.

Indian massacres already constitute a most melancholy chapter in the history of Oregon, and it is most sincerely to be hoped that the recent fearful occurrences may be the mournful means of obtaining an ample satisfaction for the past, and providing an effectual security against Indian perfidy in the future.

I do most earnestly recommend a vigorous continuance of operations to punish, and subdue all the hostile tribes of Indians on our borders, to the utmost extent of the means and forces of the Territory.

The lives and property of our citizens should no more be suffered to remain in jeopardy. It is time that certain security was afforded both that the Indians upon our frontiers were made to learn and respect our power. The punishment of Indian aggression should be speedy and complete. Deferment is only preparative of additional hostility,

The means of maintaining our volunteer forces in the field have, thus far, been provided by the generous confidence of our patriotic fellow citizens. In view of the necessity of promptness and correctness in the settlement of the accounts of these expenses, I would suggest the propriety of authorizing some suitable person to act as Commissioner for their adjudication.

The several departments have been directed to make reports of official transactions without delay. On account of the exciting and urgent circumstances attending the organization of the service the utmost capacity and efficiency may not have been secured, in all cases, and I respectfully recommend a reorganization of the various branches of the service, by means of legislative action, so as to insure the most thorough and complete efficiency.

Confidently relying upon your patriotism and ability to adopt such measures as will meet the exigency of affairs, and promote the welfare and prosperity of the Territory, I beg to assure you of my desire to afford you a most cordial co-operation.

Geo. L. Curry.

Territory of Oregon, Executive Office
Salem Dec 17th 1855